

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PEKING 00077 120603Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 77

EXDIS

FOR EA ASSISTANT SECRETARY HUMMEL FROM AMBASSADOR GATES

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR CH US
SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL LETTER TO HUA KUO-FENG

1. I HAVE NOTED SECRETARY-DESIGNATE VANCE'S JANUARY 8 STATEMENT THAT "INsofar AS OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE CONCERNED, THEY CONTINUE TO BE GUIDED BY THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE." I SUGGEST THAT WHEN NEW ADMINISTRATION ASSUMES OFFICE, PRESIDENTIAL LETTER BE SENT TO HUA KUO-FENG FORMALLY REAFFIRMING NEW ADMINISTRATION'S INTENTION TO PURSUE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS ALONG LINES CALLED FOR IN SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE.

2. I AM CONCERNED THAT THE CHINESE MAY HAVE GAINED THE IMPRESSION FROM THE RELATIVE EMPHASIS GIVEN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD IN RECENT FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENTS BY THE LEADERS OF THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION THAT WE SEE LITTLE OPPORTUNITY FOR PROGRESS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRC. AS I INDICATED IN MY LETTER OF DECEMBER 1 TO THE SECRETARY, I BELIEVE IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO DO THE OPPOSITE: TO KEEP THIS RELATIONSHIP ALIVE AND MOVING. AN EARLY, POSITIVE STATEMENT OF INTEREST WILL HELP KEEP THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PEKING 00077 120603Z

LINES OPEN AND EASE THE APPROACH TO NEW NEGOTIATIONS. I THINK, ACCORDINGLY, THAT A PRESIDENTIAL LETTER WOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE IF IT WERE SENT ON OUR INITIATIVE AND NOT MERELY IN REPLY TO A POSSIBLE CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FROM THE PRC WHEN PRESIDENT CARTER TAKES OFFICE.

3. EVEN THOUGH THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP NOW SEEMS TO BE ENGAGED IN A COMPLEX STRUGGLE FOR POWER AND POSITION, I SEE NO POINT IN WAITING FOR ALL THE DUST TO SETTLE BEFORE TAKING THIS SMALL OPENING MOVE. THAT COULD TAKE QUITE A LONG TIME. IN ADDITION, IF THERE WERE ANY SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCES ON HOW THE VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS AND FACTIONS AT THE TOP OF THE PRC VIEW THE UNITED STATES, I THINK THEY HAVE BEEN FAIRLY WELL REMOVED BY THE PURGE OF THE "GANG OF FOUR". IT IS MOST LIKELY THAT NO MATTER WHO WINS OUT WE WILL SEE A CONTINUATION OF CHOU EN-LAI'S LARGELY PRACTICAL EFFORTS TO GAIN THE MOST FOR CHINA IN THE US-USSR-PRC RELATIONSHIP. I BELIEVE THAT POSITIVE STEPS--EVEN IF THEY ARE SMALL ONES--ARE CALLED FOR TO PROTECT OUR OWN INTERESTS IN THIS RELATIONSHIP.

3. ON SEPARATE BUT RELATED SUBJECT I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR SENDING ME COPY OF MEMCON BETWEEN SECRETARY, VANCE AND HUANG CHEN ON JANUARY 8 AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

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